

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~*WE ch...
13 May*THE MOSCOW SUMMIT OF 1988 AND SECURITY IN EUROPE

The Moscow Summit will not suddenly transform the prospects for security in general and arms control in particular in Europe. It is clear from the experience with INF negotiations and ratification and from efforts to achieve a START agreement that the arms control process cannot be "rushed." The technical complexity and political delicacy of the issues make haste dangerous for the ultimate objectives.

This certainly applies to all the issues on the arms control agenda in the years ahead: START, conventional forces in Europe, and chemical weapons.

At the same time, the Moscow Summit is a dramatic symbolic event; symbols are extremely important in politics. It is a powerful but satisfying irony that the most anti-Soviet American president and the most energetic Soviet leader in a generation are coming together on Soviet soil in a meeting where both can justifiably claim victory. President Reagan, at the end of his presidency, can claim that his policies of challenge toward the USSR have helped to bring that country into a posture of more cooperative engagement with the West. Gorbachev can claim that his active response to the American challenge has made that challenge more manageable and has certainly made it seem far less threatening to the Soviet people at a time when they must turn their energies to internal revival.

There is another similarity between the positions of the American and Soviet leaders. Both are struggling against threats to their political positions, President Reagan because he suffers from encroaching "lame duck" status, Gorbachev because he faces opponents to his domestic reforms. Both therefore have an understandable interest in short-term successes; but they should also be looking out for long-term continuity in the policies they have pursued.

Soviet policy has long sought to divide and defeat the West by political means, whether confrontation or detente. Gorbachev has inherited that legacy and is not by any means free of it. But he has begun to talk about a policy of security through reconciliation rather than political victory. He calls this "new thinking." The policies of the West must encourage Soviet leaders to understand that security through genuine reconciliation can work, while security through political victory over the West cannot.

Not incidentally, genuine reconciliation includes the Soviet Union allowing East Europe countries new freedom to reform internally and adjust internationally.

The West has the best chance to promote its aims by proceeding patiently and soberly, vigilantly protecting its needed defenses and the political base for supporting them. In this spirit, the Moscow Summit must be seen as the milestone on a continuing road, not a destination or a breakthrough.

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